

**STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE
ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUTONOMY WORK GROUP
MAY 22, 2014
MEETING NOTES**

Present: Bob Lokken, Chair; Representative Reed DeMordaunt; Representative Donna Pence; Anne Ritter, George Harad, Valerie Aker

Others present: Marilyn Whitney and Elaine Leedy

Chairman Bob Lokken reviewed the day's agenda and thoughts concerning the committee's work in preparation for the June 12, 2014, joint meeting of the Structure & Governance committee. He suggested that the group focus on the attributes of a statewide accountability system and agree first on core principles and provide that framework to the joint committee for feedback.

Mr. Lokken reviewed the research done by Bellwether Partners on the accountability systems used by Massachusetts and New Orleans. He had extensive conversations with Superintendent Peter Sanchioni in Massachusetts who said that the statewide system allowed Massachusetts to rise from the middle of the pack to the top. At the same time as accountability and outcomes, Massachusetts also moved to block grant budgeting, similar to California, so that local districts would have flexibility to adapt to their particular needs. Supt. Sanchioni said that over time, their accountability bureaucracy had grown into 45 reporting rubrics, when only 8 to 10 were really important.

Massachusetts essentially has two parallel accountability systems: First is the state intervention model based on school ratings of 1 to 5, similar to Idaho's 5-Star System, with 1 being the highest (5-Star). Schools rated a 3, 4, or 5 receive state intervention to help them improve, even to the point of replacing superintendents, principals and teachers if necessary.

The second model, continuous improvement, drives the 80 percent of schools that are not struggling. Under this model, each superintendent chooses two or three areas for focused, measurable improvement over the previous year and submits them to the local board. Goals often are directed at 3rd and 8th grades which are critical points for reading and math. Meeting those goals form the basis for bonuses and renewed contracts. Results are published in local newspapers for full transparency.

George Harad noted the similarity of Idaho's 5-Star system with the systems in Massachusetts and New Orleans; however, Massachusetts's graduation requirements also are higher than Idaho's. Bob Lokken replied that in forming Idaho's recommendation, this committee may not know what the 10 best measures are, but they at least should align to the State Board of Education's 60% Goal. For high school, that means the number of students who are ready to go on to college or career without remediation as measured by

the SAT or, later, the Smarter Balanced Assessment. The percentage of students taking AP or dual credit is a clear sign of preparing.

Representative DeMordaunt asked, “what is the special sauce that Massachusetts has that we don’t have?” Bob Lokken replied that Massachusetts has transparency and accountability with genuine intervention power. There is nothing like the threat of a receiver to get attention. To avoid takeover, the low performing school must have annual improvement plans against criteria that matter and a continuous program for improvement. The bureaucracy says that Idaho has that; however, there is no correlation between 5-Star schools and college and career ready.

Good-to-Great: Bob Lokken referred the group to his draft memo, “Guiding Principles for Accountability System” (attached) for discussion. They agreed to put #4 ahead of #3, since Elements of the Good-to-Great system is the priority of the committee. This system requires a forcing function to provide superintendents a backbone to say, “we have to get these numbers up,” measuring the school against its own prior year’s numbers. For example, Superintendent Ryan Kerby in New Plymouth called all third grade teachers together and said, “our reading is “x”. Next year it needs to be “x+3%”. The teachers worked as a team in collaboration, not competition. The greatest motivation was in protecting the team – not letting the others down.

Mr. Lokken explained that the state should measure the percentage of proficiency to a high standard. Over time, the standard can change. The state cares about the districts, not the growth of an individual student. The state chooses 10 key elements to measure. Demographics should not be one of the 10 key elements. Demographics of disadvantage should drive a resource allocation, not an excuse. Perhaps longer hours are needed.

The district measures the improvement in the aggregate at the school level as reflected in its annual improvement plan in order to meet the State’s goals. The district can further divide the 10 state rubrics however they wish. The school is responsible for the individual student.

Mr. Lokken next reviewed the intervention model for lower performing schools. It should be an assistance and accountability system. Unlike Massachusetts, Idaho has the authority but not the capacity for a receivership, and needs to develop the capacity for fixing poor schools. Anne Ritter said that she had served on a turnaround school panel and it had complicated metrics. Idaho has a model in charter schools. Marilyn Whitney suggested that Tamara Baysinger from OSBE could address the group about the charter school model.

Mr. Lokken said that he would rather work on the schools that don’t need intervention. The 5-Star system needs tweeking, and the system needs to include intervention with proper resources for staff and authority to make changes. Intervention needs to have teeth. If the sorting system is correct, intervention will affect only a handful of schools.

Bob Lokken asked the group to consider if the state can fix a community that is happy with an average school. In that case, the only forcing function is continuous improvement. If the data is presented correctly, peer pressure and pride of work is more powerful than a paycheck. Present the data in 10 rubrics, a cohort of like-kind schools, for every measure. "Look at you – you are a 63. Look at them – they are a 93." Eliminate environmental excuses because each group has the same. Superintendents will be able to see the gap and the competitive spirit will take over. The good get better, the best get even better. The curve moves.

To achieve this requires like-kind cohorts with high standards. It needs transparency with tools to understand what the numbers mean. It is the relationship to another number: last year, this year.

Next meeting: June 3, 2014, 1:30-3:30

Action Items:

- Review and update core principles – is this what we are going to share?
- Work on a sample of likely rubrics, pulling from MA and Idaho and Anne Ritter's performance plan;
- Karen Echeverria to attend with survey on transparency and how districts are getting information that is meaningful;
- Develop 10-12 questions on survey monkey;
- Follow up with superintendents on what autonomy they want. Perhaps one allocation for teacher salaries and one bucket for everything else;
- Guiding principles and overall direction.

Memo

Date: May 22, 2014

To: Autonomy and Accountability Work Group - Bob Lokken (Chair), Reed DeMordaunt (Co-Chair), George Harad, Donna Pence, Anne Ritter (Jessica Harrison)

From: Bob Lokken

Re: Guiding Principles for Accountability System

In order to get clarity and focus in our recommendations for the state's accountability system, I think it is useful to outline the guiding principles that we agree should shape and be the foundation for the final recommendations. I have taken the liberty to make an initial draft of these (below) that we can mark up, add to, or delete as the team sees fit. These mostly can from our previous discussions and from my reading on other states systems.

Guiding Principles for the Statewide K-12 Accountability System (K12-AS)

1. The goal of the K12-AS is to help the state achieve it's overall goal of >60% of young adults entering the workforce having complete some form of post-secondary (PS) degree/certification. The role of the K-12 system in this goal is to prepare students for success at the PS level.
2. The K12-AS must serve two related, but different fundamental purposes. First, it must have an "intervention" mechanism for under-performing schools, designed to move the system to an acceptable level of performance. Secondly, the system should serve as a catalyst for "good schools" to become "great schools". In Idaho, we don't just want good schools, we aspire for all schools to become great. The two mechanisms have much different methods by which they would accomplish their aim, and it is a mistake to try and have the same system to deal with both scenarios.
3. Elements of the "intervention" system
 - a. The intervention system must have clearly define the measures and triggers used to classify if a school is underperforming and in need of intervention.
 - b. There should be different levels within the intervention system. These levels indicate the level of underperformance and chronic nature of the situation. The levels in turn drive the type and degree of intervention that the state would use.

- c. The intervention system must not simply be a public or “judgment” style mechanism. In an addition to the classification, the system should offer tools and assistance to help the struggling schools.
 - d. The system should apply to a school, not a district, although the district superintendent is the point person in terms of accountability.
 - e. The State, in cooperation with the local school board, is the primary agent of enforcement in this level of accountability.
4. Elements of the “Good to Great” system
- a. The basis of this is not episodic intervention, but rather founded in continuous improvement, innovation, and collaboration. Additionally, and with this in mind, this systems is driven locally as to the specificity on where annual improvements are made.
 - b. The good to great system should have an annual cadence and rhythm to it. Continual small improvement, continually refined and accumulated over time, is the manner by which schools become great, and stay great.
 - c. The good to great systems need a move fine grained measurement system, such that annual progress can be measured, evaluated, and celebrated. Coarse grain measures such as the 5 star system or the underperformance triggers are not very useful in the continuous improvement march.
 - d. Unlike the invention system, the good to great system is completely driven by the local school boards and administration. The state’s role is to support these efforts first and foremost via clear, concise, uniform, and transparent measures, which are the foundation of the improvement system. (Outcomes measures indicate improvement, and should not be confused with activities and activity measures.)
 - e. Public transparency and the local school board and the accountability enforcement agents in this system.
5. The foundation of the K12-AS is clear, concise, uniform, and transparent measurement of student achievement. Measures that are overly complex or that are suspect in their accurate measure of student learning should be avoided. People need to understand and have clarity on what is needed, this is eroded with suspect or complex metrics. The measure of a metrics value is not “perfect”, that is a logical fallacy, as nothing is perfect. The measure is a metrics value is “is it better than the alternative” ... as some success indicator, even when flawed, is better than fling blind.
6. The focal point of the state’s K12-AS must be the local leadership, specifically the local Superintendent. The state should not disempower the local people by reaching around the Superintendent. Nor should the state hold the “district” or “school” accountable, as those are entities that contain many people and students. The leadership is where the state level of accountability should stop and downstream accountabilities should be the purview of the local officials.